



JOHN L. SCOTT, SHERIFF

**County of Los Angeles**  
**Sheriff's Department Headquarters**  
**4700 Ramona Boulevard**  
**Monterey Park, California 91754-2169**



October 17, 2014

The Honorable Board of Supervisors  
County of Los Angeles  
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration  
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Supervisors:

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT  
REPORT BACK ON THE FINDINGS OF AN ALLEGATION  
OF AN ILLEGAL SEARCH**

At the September 16, 2014, Board meeting, the Sheriff was requested to report back on issues raised by a member of the public, Ms. Diana Beard-Williams, regarding a traffic stop and illegal search of an unknown woman in the city of Lancaster, which resulted in a Federal lawsuit against the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (Department).

While Ms. Williams failed to provide any details of the woman, it appears that the allegations she made arise out of an incident that occurred in July 2009 during which the Plaintiff alleged her civil rights were violated when she was subjected to an illegal stop and search of her vehicle and person in the city of Lancaster.

On July 31, 2009, a male deputy effectuated a traffic stop of the Plaintiff for following an emergency vehicle too closely, a violation of California Vehicle Code 21706. In the course of the traffic stop, the deputy observed the Plaintiff making movements inside the vehicle as if she was attempting to hide something, and found her behavior erratic and suspicious.

Believing the Plaintiff was under the influence of narcotics and/or attempting to conceal narcotics on her person, or in her vehicle, the deputy requested via his radio that a female deputy respond to search the Plaintiff's person. Two female deputies arrived at the scene and one conducted an initial pat-down search of the Plaintiff. The second female deputy was a senior officer who observed the first deputy's search and believed that the initial search was inadequate. The second female deputy searched the Plaintiff in a more thorough manner. According to the Plaintiff, the second female deputy

*A Tradition of Service*

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searched underneath her clothing with gloves and conducted a body cavity search. The second female deputy denies any kind of body cavity search, but acknowledged that she searched the Plaintiff's shirt (over the bra), and the back of the Plaintiff's waistband. The deputies found no illegal substances in either the vehicle or on the Plaintiff's person. The Plaintiff was issued a citation and released in the field. The Plaintiff's Vehicle Code citation was eventually dismissed after deputies failed to appear for trial.

On March 15, 2010, the Plaintiff and her attorney filed a lawsuit against the Department. The Plaintiff alleged causes of action for Federal civil rights violations under 42 United States Code 1983; false imprisonment; assault; battery; intentional infliction of emotional distress; negligence; and State civil rights violations under California Civil Code 51.7 and 52.1. The Plaintiff claimed that the deputies' actions were motivated by her race, which is African-American. A jury returned a verdict in favor of the two female deputies who conducted the searches, but ruled against the male deputy who made the traffic stop and called the female deputies to the scene. The parties eventually agreed on a stipulated judgment of \$50,000 to the Plaintiff, as well as her attorney's fees.

Should you have any questions, please contact Captain Patrick A. Nelson, Lancaster Sheriff's Station, at (661) 940-3801.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John L. Scott". The signature is stylized with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

JOHN L. SCOTT  
SHERIFF